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Long Lost Sounds — Cereal Box Kids' Choice Awards 2003 CD

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As of this writing, it's been nearly two decades since the hallowed year of 2003. The musical landscape back then was dominated by artists like Beyoncé and Linkin Park, but no examination of the year's music is truly complete without the mention of the General Mills' Kids Choice Awards 2003 CD.

If you are wondering what that is, it's exactly what it sounds like. The Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards need no introduction — the slime, the orange carpet, the blimp — those are cultural staples. Based on the scant information I can find online, the 2003 KCAs did a promotional tie-in with General Mills (the cereal company) and put these CDs as the "special prize" inside countless cereal boxes.

It's common to find small plastic toys in cereal boxes even today, but a whole CD mixtape — that feels like something truly out of the early aughts of the 21st century. So, what were these CDs? There were actually four or five different versions or "volumes" of the CD, each one with different songs from the biggest teen artists of that time, most likely those associated with Nickelodeon or the KCAs. The CDs were a partnership amongst Nick, General Mills, and released under the Zomba/Jive Records label. Zomba has essentially disbanded now, but it used to be part of the Sony Music Entertainment company, and the Jive Label was specifically developed for 90s teen pop/boy bands (they signed Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys, and NSYNC at one point).

I must have gotten this cereal box at 2003 in some point, though I was extremely young at the time. Either way, the CD stuck around and I distinctly remember it being in rotation in our family car extremely often. Maybe I still have the physical copy lying around somewhere, but it looks like people are selling it on eBay for very cheap still. Personally, I had the **Vol. 4 CD** and it includes some songs that are difficult to find on streaming platforms like Spotify, but I was able to dig them up on YouTube and place them in exact order of the vol. 4 disc (thanks Internet!). If you were a kid or teen in the early to mid-2000s, the sounds of these songs will probably be a blast from the past, and you might even recognize some artists. Here is the seven-track playlist I made on YouTube — enjoy the nostalgia!

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